

ASTON, PA—On Sunday, May 3, 2009, Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-07) presented a special commemorative baton, which was flown in orbit by NASA, to the Delaware County Symphony's Maestro Roman Pawlowski, who is retiring after 40 years at the Orchestra's helm. The presentation was made during the Maestro's final concert at the Meagher Theatre at Neumann University.

"I would like to offer my heartfelt congratulations to Maestro Roman Pawlowski for an amazing career and his decades of inspired leadership of the Delaware County Symphony," said Congressman Sestak. "The great beauty of music is its power to transport us, so I feel it is apt that we honor Maestro Pawlowski with this baton that has journeyed to the heavens."

The baton, an icon of leadership in classical music, was flown aboard the Space Shuttle Endeavor to the International Space Station on November 14-30, 2008, traveling over 6.6 million miles in 251 orbits of the Earth and reaching an altitude of 122 nautical miles. The baton was on board and in flight for 15 days, 20 hours, 29 minutes, and 37 seconds. It was carried aboard Endeavor as a personal item by Shuttle Commander Captain Christopher J. Ferguson.

Such honors have precedent in the world of classical music. Andre Previn, of the London Symphony Orchestra, and Wolfgang Sawallisch, of the Philadelphia Orchestra, have also been honored by having their batons taken aboard NASA space flights.

The baton's journey becomes part of NASA's documented history and is an expression of both the nation and the federal government's appreciation of Maestro Pawlowski's contributions to our country. NASA called the mission the perfect marriage of Science, Technology, and the Arts. Neuman University has agreed to be the permanent institutional home and custodian of a NASA display featuring the Maestro's baton and its historic journey into Space.

*Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security*

*Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the U.S. Congress.*

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